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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Letter dated 6 July 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a letter from Dr. Radoslav Bulajić, Deputy Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 103 and 104 (c) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/49/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Letter dated 29 June 1994 from the Deputy Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to inform you that the process of the ethnic cleansing of Serbs and discrimination against them vis-á-vis Muslims and Croats is being continued in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia. As a consequence of the policy of ethnic cleansing, 707,368 Serbs had to leave their homes in those territories in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina in which the power of Bosnian Muslims and Croats was established. Considering the fact that there were 1,320,644 Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina (with 326,280 of those who declared themselves Yugoslavs) according to the 1981 census, about 50 per cent of the Serbs have been expelled from their homes and deprived of their property.

The process of ethnic cleansing in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina, as in the Republic of Croatia before, was begun by the regular armed forces of the Republic of Croatia and paramilitary formations of Bosnian Croats (the first instances of the infiltration of the regular armed forces of the Republic of Croatia into the former Bosnia-Herzegovina began on 17 February 1992, whereupon they started the massacre and expulsion of the Serb population in the regions of Bosanska Posavina, western Herzegovina and the Kupres Plateau), which process was subsequently continued by armed formations of Bosnian Muslims.

The largest number of Serbs were expelled from Mostar (Serbs accounted for 30 per cent of the population of this town and were expelled in a joint action by Croatian and Muslim forces, which also destroyed all Orthodox churches and other places of worship of the Serb people in the region), other townships in western Herzegovina, and particularly from some regions in central Bosnia and Podrinje. Before the outbreak of the civil war in former Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbs accounted for 29 per cent of the population in the Goražde area and 30.1 per cent in Srebrenica; Serbs constituted a relative majority in the Sarajevo borough of Novi Grad; they accounted for about 20 per cent of the population of the Sarajevo borough of Stari Grad; between 20 per cent to 55 per cent in the following Sarajevo boroughs: Centar, Sarajevo-Ilidža and Sarajevo-Novo. Furthermore, a great number of Serbs and Yugoslavs (ever since the communist regime of the former Yugoslavia recognized Muslims as a separate people, Serbs were almost the only ones who declared themselves Yugoslavs) lived in Tuzla, 32.4 per cent, and Zenica, 28.4 per cent.

Out of 707,368 Serbs expelled from their homes, 427,368 found new homes in the Republic of Srpska (about 280,000 Serbs from the former Bosnia-Herzegovina live as refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) as follows:

(a) The region of Herzegovina 1 (towns: Čajniče, Foča, Kalinovik, Rudo, Višegrad) - 34,176 Serbs expelled from other regions under Croatian-Muslim control;

(b) The region of Herzegovina 2 (towns: Bileća, Gacko, Konjic, Ljubinje, Nevesinje, Stolac, Trebinje) - 30,742;

(c) The region of north Bosnia (towns: Brod, Derventa, Doboj, Gračanica, Lukavac, Maglaj, Modriča, Odžak, Petrovo, Teslić, Tešanj, Zavidovići) - 54,501;

(d) The region of Krajina 1 (towns: Banja Luka, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Jajce) - 71,145;

(e) The region of Krajina 2 (towns: Bihać, Drvar, Glamoč, Grahovo, Ključ, Krupa na Uni, Kupres, Mrkonjić, Petrovac, Šipovo) - 46,171;

(f) The region of Sarajevo (towns: Sarajevo-Centar, Hadžići, Ilidža, Ilijaš, Rajlovac, Vogošća) - 52,164;

(g) The region of Birač (towns: Zvornik, Milići, Sekovići, Vlasenica) - 35,991;

(h) The region of Romanija (towns: Pale, Sokolac, Han Pijesak) - 39,039;

(i) The region of Semberija (towns: Bijeljina, Ugljevik, Brčko) - 62,989.

The Serbs remaining in the towns under Muslim control - Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla, Travnik and others - are the victims of ruthless discrimination. Not only do the Muslim authorities force them to participate in military operations against Serbs, particularly in digging trenches and cleaning mine fields (over 100 Serbs were executed for refusing to participate in Muslim armed formations or to dig tunnels under the Sarajevo airport and at other locations in Sarajevo), but also withhold humanitarian assistance from their quotas sent by Western and other countries. As Serbs are the most frequent victims of job dismissals and are thus left without means to support themselves, they have become virtual hostages whom Muslim authorities do not allow freely to leave the region.

One of the basic principles of democracy is the freedom of an individual to choose freely where he/she wants to live, especially if his/her existence is threatened in the environment in which he/she happens to live. The international community would therefore be well advised to establish the reasons why members of a certain nationality decide to leave regions under the control of one of the warring parties. In point of fact, even in conditions where there is no discrimination but where job opportunities are scarce as a result of economic difficulties, there does arise a need for economic emigration. For these reasons, the international community should exert maximum efforts to ensure full respect for the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religion or nationality, in the territories under the control of one of the warring parties in the civil war in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina. One of these rights is the right of each individual to decide freely whether he/she wants to stay in the territory controlled by the authorities of the other party in the civil war.

In presenting these regrettable facts, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its hope that a just and durable peace will soon be established in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina, for without peace neither Serb nor Croatian and Muslim peoples can live in dignity.

(Signed) Dr. Radoslav BULAJIĆ
Deputy Federal Minister of
Foreign Affairs